

CPEC

News Release

California Postsecondary Education Commission
770 L Street, Suite 1160, Sacramento, California 95814
www.cpec.ca.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Adrian Griffin
916.445.1000
agriffin@cpec.ca.gov

Julia Blair
916.445.1000
jblair@cpec.ca.gov

California needs to gear up for 200,000 additional community college students by 2019

Even with slowing growth, state projections show demand will exceed ability of community colleges to serve students

SACRAMENTO — August 31, 2009 — A new report from the California Postsecondary Education Commission, “Ready or Not, Here They Come,” provides further evidence of what community college officials have been saying for some time now: community college enrollment is at its highest level ever and enrollment demand will continue to grow over the next decade. In the absence of greater state support, California’s promise of college opportunity could be severely challenged.

CPEC’s new projections show a steadily increasing demand for slots at the state’s 110 community colleges. CPEC estimates that in fall 2016, enrollment demand will pass the 2 million mark for the first time. By 2019, the state needs to prepare for 222,000 additional students above current enrollments.

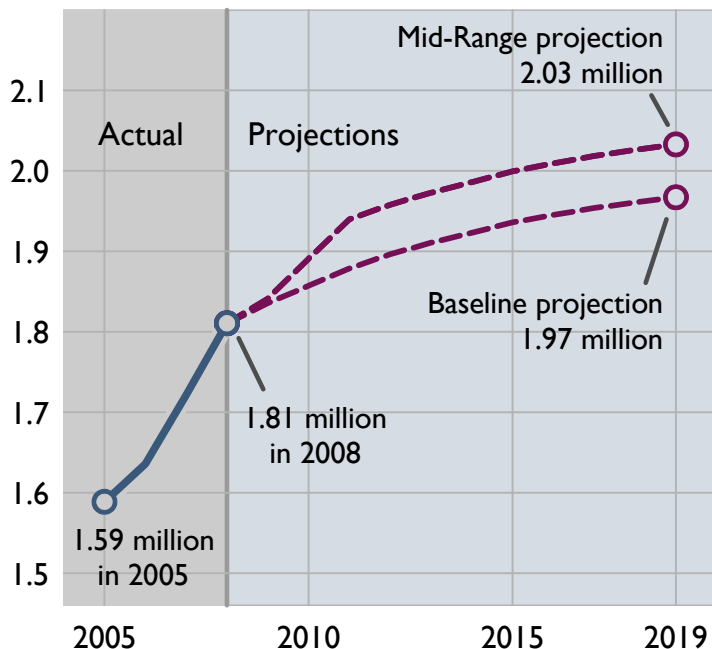
Enrollment is projected to grow more slowly than in previous decades when the baby boomers, and then the children of the baby boomers, entered college. But still, the community college system will not be able to accommodate all who wish to enroll.

“These are conservative projections — the problem could actually be worse,” said John Perez, chair of CPEC. “This could impact many Californians. It’s a problem, not just for workers who need community colleges for job training, but also for high school graduates who can’t afford to start their education at a four-year university.”

—MORE—

Community College Enrollment Projections

Headcount enrollment
millions



The Baseline projection is made by applying the community college participation rates for 2008 to population projections from the California Department of Finance.

Community college participation rates increased from 2005 to 2008. Under the Mid-Range projection, community college participation rates continue to increase gradually until 2011 and then level off.

Participation rates used in the
Mid-Range projection

Students enrolled per thousand population	
2008	91
2011 estimate	97

See page 3 for the data used to draw this graph.

CPEC made two sets of projections — a baseline projection that relies solely on population growth, and a higher mid-range projection that uses recent trends in enrollment patterns. “The mid-range projection is more likely,” said Karen Humphrey, Executive Director of CPEC. “In the past few years, we have seen an increasing percentage of Californians wanting to enroll at community colleges, and we expect this trend to continue.”

Budget cuts harm opportunity

The community colleges took an 8 percent budget cut for the 2009–10 school year. If the colleges cut enrollment proportionately, nearly 180,000 potential students could be turned away. The state is currently not providing any funding for enrollment growth. Three-quarters of districts already serve more students than they have space for. To catch up with growing enrollment demand, community colleges will need at least 3 percent enrollment growth funding annually until college opportunity is restored.

Over the past year, UC and CSU have raised student fees and cut enrollments. It is unknown how much this essentially redirects students to the community colleges. Underemployed workers are using the community colleges to retrain for new careers, and there is renewed focus on the importance of higher education in driving the nation’s green economy.

—MORE—

“Eventually, the state must figure out how to preserve educational opportunity during economic downturns as well as in times of prosperity,” said Dr. Stacy Wilson, CPEC senior researcher who developed the projections. “I am worried that the potential loss in college opportunity might include 118,000 Latinos and 23,000 African Americans, setting back some of the gains in equity over the past four years.”

Commission meeting

CPEC staff will present the report at the quarterly meeting, Sept. 8 in Sacramento. Other items to be discussed include an update on how the new federal tax credits will offset higher student fees and a staff report on the state’s “degree gap,” looking at employment of university graduates in jobs that may not be making full use of their education.

A meeting agenda and reports may be viewed at www.cpec.ca.gov/agendas/agnd0909.asp. CPEC audio-streams its meetings at media.cpec.ca.gov/media.

###

The California Postsecondary Education Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. The Commission’s primary focus is to ensure that the state’s educational resources are used effectively to provide Californians with postsecondary education opportunities.

Data used for graph on page 2

	Actual	Baseline	Mid-Range
2005	1.589	–	–
2006	1.636	–	–
2007	1.721	–	–
2008	1.811	1.811	1.811
2009	–	1.835	1.841
2010	–	1.857	1.891
2011	–	1.879	1.940
2012	–	1.896	1.958
2013	–	1.911	1.973
2014	–	1.923	1.986
2015	–	1.936	1.999
2016	–	1.945	2.009
2017	–	1.954	2.019
2018	–	1.961	2.026
2019	–	1.967	2.033